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American School
of Oriental Research
in Palestine

A NEW INSCRIPTION FROM UPPER GALILEE

ON Wednesday, April 4, 1906, as the pupils of the American School of Archaeology, on their tour through northern Palestine under my direction, were approaching the bridge over the Hasbani, near its junction with the Leddan and Banias sources to form the Jordan, in the midst of a furious storm which had threatened the complete arrest of our expedition, I was halted at the head of the line of march by a shout from my son, B. Selden Bacon, at its other extremity, that he saw traces of lettering on a stone by the roadside. We were then less than half a mile west of the bridge Gisr el-Ghajar, on our way to Banias, having left Abil (Abel of Beth-Maacah) less than an hour behind us to the west, and looking directly east over Tell el-Khadi (Dan) to the splendid castle of Subebbeh (Belfort) towering above Banias (Caesarea Philippi). We were following the immemorial track of commerce from Tyre, Sidon, and the Phoenician coast to Damascus by the south side of Hermon over Dan (Laish "which belongeth to the Sidonians") and Caesarea Philippi. In the pelting storm photography and squeeze impression were equally impossible. Even a note-book copy was a matter of hours, owing to the extreme faintness of the lettering, but for which, however, the inscription in so public and well travelled a spot must long since have been reported. Under the circumstances the only practical course appeared to be to permit the party to continue, remaining behind with my son to make the copy, and returning under more favorable conditions if the inscription proved unknown and of sufficient importance.

In spite of numbed fingers and dripping note-book, the copy of the faint, almost undecipherable letters was at last complete, yielding a Greek inscription of 304-305 A.D. in thirteen lines

with letters averaging $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height. The stone was a basalt boulder similar to those which completely cover the fields at no great distance, but of unusual size, and doubtless chosen for its purpose (the marking of a boundary) because of its convenient shape. About 5 feet in total length, the upper part, measuring about 2 feet by $1\frac{1}{2}$, and about 9 inches thick, presents on one side a fairly smooth and uniform surface for the lettering which covers it. This appears to be due to careful selection of the block rather than to artificial shaping. The lower part, probably once sunk in the ground, though the stone lay prostrate on the surface when discovered, was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length, broader and thicker than the upper third, and less even in surface. Minute and careful examination revealed no trace of lettering on it. The copy of the inscription follows:

- ΔΙΟΚΛΗΤΙΑΝΟC
 ΚΑΙΜΑΞΙΜΙΑΝΟC
 CЄBKKAΙ
 ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΟC
 5. ΚΑΙΜΑΞΙΜΙΑΝΟC
 ΚЄCΑΡЄCΛΙΘΟΝΔΙ
 ΟΡΙΖΟΝΤΑΑΓΡΟΥ
 ΕΠΟΙΚΙΟΥΧΡΗCΙΜΙ
 ΑΝΟΥCΤΗΡΙΧΘΗ
 10. ΝЄЄΚΕΛΕΥCΑΝ
 ΦΡΟΝΤΙΔΙΕΛΙ
 CΤΑΤΟΥΤΟΥΤΟΥΔΙ
 ΑΚΗΜ.

The opening formula, "Diocletian and Maximian, august Caesars, and Constantius and Maximian, Caesars," is supported by a Latin inscription from Palmyra¹ which uses the equivalent style, *D. et M. invictissimi imperatores, et C. et M. nobilissimi Caesares*. The rest of the inscription scarcely admits of doubt as to the reading, except in the case of what would seem to be two proper names. Sublinear points in the copy above indicate the doubtful letters. It may be possible, however, to

¹ Lebas-Waddington, No. 2626.

obtain some further light from the excellent photographs (Figs. 1 and 2), which were taken after the removal of the stone to a position of security against defacement.¹

With the exception of the doubtful letters of the name in line 8 the translation leaves little to be desired in point of clearness as far as line 11. The emperors named "have ordered (this) stone to be set up to define the boundary of the farm adjoining the villa of Chresimianos (?) (placing the work) under the care of . . ." Lines 12 and 13 can also be read with practical certainty by the aid of an almost exactly parallel inscription on a boundary stone of the same emperors, the same date, and the same region found at Namara (Namr) in the Hauran, and published in the *Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale* (Tome I, 1888, p. 4) as follows:

.
 CEB KWN . .
 KAIMAZIMIANOCETTIΦ
 KAICA . . . ΛΙΘΟΝΔΙΟΡΙΖΟΝ
 ΤΑΟΡΟΥΚΩΜΗCΓΑ . . .
 ΜΕΑCΚΑΙΝΑΜΑΡ? . .
 ΩΝ(C)ΤΗΡΙΧΘΗΝΑΙΕΚΕΛ
 ΕΥCΑΝΦΟΝΤΙ()ΜΑΡ()
 ΙΟΥΦ . . ΠΤΤΚΗΜCΕΙΤΟ
 ΡΟC

The last word is obviously a transliteration of the Latin "censitor," the functionary charged in this case with fixing the boundary. In the inscription from Abil either the word is abbreviated or the letters following have been obliterated. It seems to be preceded by the preposition *διὰ*. Thus only the perplexing letters at the end of line 11 remain to be elucidated. *Φροντίδι ἐπιστάτου τούτου διὰ κημσίτορος* might possibly be rendered "under charge of the officer appointed for this purpose through the assessor"; but aside from questions of grammar, it is difficult to find a Π under the pretty distinct Λ near the end of line 11, and there are traces of one or more letters following.

¹ The two photographs are taken from slightly different angles with the main object in Fig. 2 of bringing the lower lines (scarcely visible in Fig. 1) into better view.

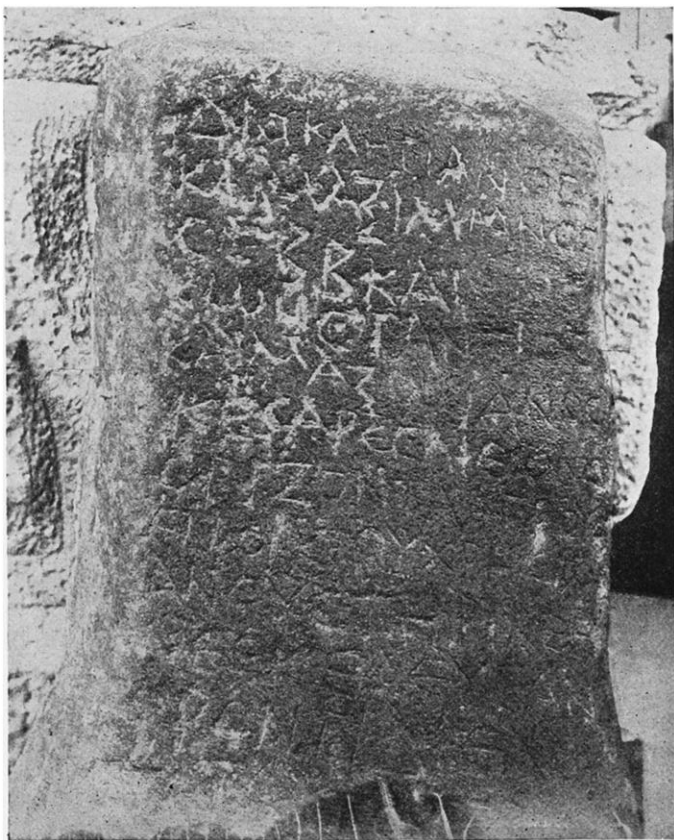


FIGURE 1. — UPPER PART OF THE INSCRIPTION.

Professor Clermont-Ganneau, to whom I owe the reference to two similar inscriptions recently discovered by Dussaud in the Hauran,¹ accepts also that author's suggestion as the most important clew to the meaning. Two fragments found on the road between 'Atil and es-Souwaidâ in the Hauran (No. 23, p. 247) give the names of the emperors Diocletian and Maximian as fixing the boundaries (*ὄροι*) of Dionysias (es-Souwaidâ) and Athelene ('Atil). A larger inscription of sixteen lines (No. 175, p. 298) found at 'Aqrabâ in almost perfect condition gives the following:

¹ Dussaud, *Mission dans les Régions Désertiques de la Syrie Moyenne*, 1903, pp. 247 and 298.



FIGURE 2. — LOWER PART OF THE INSCRIPTION.

Δεσπόται ἡμῶν Διοκλητιανὸς Μαξιμιανὸς σεβαστοὶ καὶ Κων-
 στάντειος καὶ Μαξιμιανὸς καίσαρες λίθον διορίζοντα ὅρους μητρο-
 κωμίας Ἀκράβης καὶ Ἀσίχων στηριχθῆναι ἐκέλευσαν, φροντίδι
 Λουκίου Καία[μου] κηνσίτορ[ο]ς.

The stone, accordingly, like that of Namr first mentioned, marked the boundary between the mother village Akrahe (ʿAq-rabâ) and Asichon (ʿÔsidj). Dussaud infers from the number of boundary stones of this date and type the probability of some vast *opération cadastrale*, with relation to the establishment of a taxable unit, the *iugum* or *caput*, consisting of lands

of differing character and unequal extent, whose total would represent an equal value. He refers to M. van Berchem, *La propriété territoriale et l'impôt foncier sous les premiers Califes*, Geneva, 1886, pp. 46–47, and calls attention to the mention of the *censitor* whose function was the registration of imposts. I have not been able to consult the work of van Berchem, but it would appear to be a confirmation of Dussaud's conjecture that the new inscription from Abil, unlike those previously discovered, records the boundaries, not of a village or district, but of a country estate (ἄγρου ἐπουκίου). It would seem not unreasonable to connect these evidences of a fixation of land values by the “censitor,” with the edicts of Diocletian for the fixation of prices of goods sold in the markets.¹

B. W. BACON.

¹ See the articles by Mommsen in *Hermes*, XXV, 1890, ‘Diocletian's Edict De pretiis rerum venalium’ and by Bluemner in *Philologus*, LIX, 1900, on newly discovered fragments.